

rise, and from the harvest of Sorrow we may garner Peace, if we but once realise that there are other burdens heavier than our own, and that others lack our many compensations. While there is the cry of a little child to hush, while there is doubt to clear, anguish to soothe, while there are sky and sea and sun to speak of heaven, while there is yet a sigh to hear, an undone deed to do, Life is worth living!

NOTE.—For further particulars of the work of the Invalid Children's Aid Association, please apply to the Hon. Sec., I.C.A.A., 18, Buckingham Street, Strand.

OUR CHILDREN'S SUNDAYS.

BY MRS. C. H. CHASE.

"Sunday's the very nicest day in all the week; I wish it would come oftener." So said a little boy of six to his mother as she put him to bed one Sunday evening. Is there not in every good parent's heart the longing that Sunday should be to the children the best day of all the week? Some recall the strict tedious Sabbaths of their childhood, and do not wonder at the rebound which in the present day threatens to turn our English Sunday into the continental holiday. It may be helpful to very briefly consider what God would have Sundays to be to our children, and then what we parents can do to make them such.

We gather from the Old Testament that the Sabbath was meant to be, as its name implies, a day of *rest*; also a day of special worship. "Moreover also, I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Ezekiel xx. 12; Ex. xxi. 12—17). Turning to the New Testament we find our Lord correcting the mistaken notions and exaggerated restrictions which had turned the *rest* into a burden "too heavy to be borne." He taught by words and acts that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," given to man for rest, for worship, and for doing good.

Here then we get our three points for the children's Sunday. It is to be to them a *rest* day, a *holy* day, a useful and therefore a *happy* day. So may it become to them, indeed, a type of heaven.

But how? Those little active limbs and brains, for ever on the go! What is rest to them? To sit still is downright hard work. No! rest to them is, what no doubt it is to many older ones, change of work, a variety of occupation. Sunday's occupations must then be as unlike those of the working days

as possible. What shall the little ones in the nursery do? A few practical suggestions may be a help to some parents, and will, it is hoped, call forth others. A plan has been adopted by some mothers to set apart one shelf or drawer for Sunday toys. Then at Christmas and on birthdays each child is allowed to pick out one or two of its presents to be kept for Sundays (and most interesting the consultations this involves!), but never to be touched except on Sundays—not even on wet days, for there is a “wet-day shelf” too. Then, when Sunday comes, the nursery-floor may shock some eyes, but the rest, in its true sense, as well as the happiness those Sunday toys can give, is incalculable. A wooden church to put up and take to pieces is a delight, and the demand for other Sunday toys will, it is to be hoped, create its supply. A large box with plenty of letters with which to make up texts or hymns; texts to paint, &c., called “Something for Sunday” (published by Shaw and Co., Paternoster Row), and texts printed in various heathen dialects, have a special charm where a missionary spirit is at work; also “Helps for the Day of Rest” (published by Wells Gardner, Darton, and Co., 2, Paternoster Buildings).

Except in clergymen's houses one great charm of Sunday is that it is the father's leisure day, when talks can be uninterrupted and garden rambles indulged in without hurry.

Then, as aids in making the day holy, come the special teaching from pictures shown *only* on Sundays, the Bible-class for older ones, the hymn-singing, the mental Bible pictures, all very reverently handled, the suitable story-books, especially delightful when the insatiable appetite for fiction is kept well in hand during the week; and last, but *not* least, the church services, when the little ones understand clearly that it is a high privilege that father and mother go to worship God, and must not be disturbed by questions nor restlessness from the children; while all that puzzles or interests is carefully explained to them and talked over afterwards. Is it not *sometimes* a matter overlooked to teach each little child a prayer to use before and after service; and is it not well to put markers in proper places before going to church?

If it is to be a happy day it is essential that the children should do something to make others happy. The domestic arrangements for Sunday in Mr. Kingsley's household have served as a copy to many others. The girls making the beds, the boys

clearing the breakfast things, setting chairs and Bibles for the class, taking charge of “baby,” or reading to the younger ones; in these and similar ways making the day really one of rest to the servants. In ministering to old people who cannot get to church, to children in the Sunday School, to lonely ones to whom Sunday is apt to prove a long day; by the flowers or book taken to the invalid, the letters written to the brothers and sisters at school, and in many other ways untold pleasure is given and received.

As to the older children, in this as in other matters we can but give high principles and consistent examples and leave them to shape their own practice; but let us see to it “while we have opportunity” that Sundays are so spent, that when time has scattered our children far and wide and taken us to the keeping of an Eternal Sabbath, the memory of those holy, happy, useful Sundays may be a bond between brothers and sisters; a weekly reminder and a weekly incentive, which shall help them in training *their* children also to “call the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, honourable.”